

The Kingdoms of Glory

Lesson 20

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual, published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lesson 20, pp110-114.

Purpose: To carefully consider the eternal inheritances in the three kingdoms of glory and to encourage them to live in such a way that they will be able to inherit celestial glory and dwell in Heavenly Father's presence with their families.

Preparation: Prayerfully study Doctrine and Covenants 76; 131; 132:19-24; 137.

Review: Remember the three parts of our eternal existence: premortal life, mortal life, and life after death.

If we did not have the revelations in D&C 76, 131, and 137, we would know very little about what our condition will be after we are resurrected.

President Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of the Church, about the vision recorded in D&C 76:

"I will refer to the 'Vision' alone, as a revelation which gives more light, more truth, and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be" (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, ed. G. Homer Durham [1946], 47-48).

1. The kingdoms of glory and "the testimony of Jesus" Teach and discuss D&C 76:11-24, 40-43, 119.

•What circumstances led to the vision that is recorded in D&C 76? (See D&C 76:11-19; see also the heading to D&C 76.)

The entire vision testifies of Jesus Christ and His infinite Atonement. Joseph Smith's description of the vision begins and ends with a testimony of the Savior.

Read D&C 76:20-24 and D&C 76:119. Read D&C 76:40-43.

Doctrine and Covenants 76 shows that Heavenly Father has provided three kingdoms of glory in which most people will live after they are resurrected: the telestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the celestial kingdom. Each of us will inherit a kingdom of glory based on the manner in which we have "received the testimony of Jesus" (D&C 76:5 1). Encourage class members to keep this in mind as they discuss this revelation.

2. Perdition D&C 76:25-39, 44-49. The word perdition refers to a state of loss and destruction rather than a kingdom of glory. Those who experience this are called "sons of perdition" because they follow Satan, who is called Perdition (D&C 76:25-26, 31-32).

•When Lucifer rebelled in the Council in Heaven, he was thrust down to earth (Revelation 12:7-9; D&C 29:36-37; 76:25-28; Moses 4:1-3). What did he begin to do when he was cast out? (See D&C 76:29; Moses 4:4.) What can we do to win the war against Satan in our lives? (For some answers to this question, see 1 Nephi 14:14; D&C 10:5; 27:15-18.)

•What did the Lord reveal about the suffering of the sons of perdition? (See D&C 76:32-34, 36-38, 44-49.) Why are sons of perdition condemned to experience such great suffering? (See D&C 76:30-31, 35. For an explanation of what it means to deny the Holy Ghost, see the following quotation.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: *"What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy"* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 358).

3. The telestial kingdom D&C 76:81-90, 98-106, 109-12. The telestial kingdom is the lowest kingdom of glory. The Lord compared its glory to the glory of the stars (D&C 76:81, 98; see also 1 Corinthians 15:40-41, including Joseph Smith's translation in footnote 40a).

•Who will inherit the telestial kingdom? (See D&C 76:81-83, 98-101, 103.)

•What conditions or limitations will be placed on those in the telestial kingdom?

(See D&C 76:84-86, 102, 104-6, 112.)

You may need to explain that the "hell" referred to in verses 84 and 106 is spirit prison, a temporary state between death and resurrection. Those in spirit prison who do not accept the gospel will eventually be resurrected and inherit telestial glory. Have class members read verses 85 and 106 and the second paragraph in the Bible Dictionary definition of the word hell (the first full paragraph on page 700).

4. The terrestrial kingdom D&C 76:71-80, 91, 97. The Lord compared the glory of the terrestrial kingdom to the glory of the moon (D&C 76:78, 97; see also 1 Corinthians 15:40-41).

•Who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom? (See D&C 76:71-75, 79).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve explained: *"Those destined to inherit the terrestrial kingdom are: (1) those who died 'without law'-those heathen and pagan people who do not hear the gospel in this life, and who would not accept it with all their hearts should they hear it; (2) those who hear and reject the gospel in this life and then accept it in the spirit world; (3) those 'who are honorable men of the earth, who [are] blinded by the craftiness of men'; and (4) those who are lukewarm members of the true church and who have testimonies, but who are not true and faithful in all things"* (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 146).

•What conditions or limitations will be placed on those in the terrestrial kingdom? (See D&C 76:76-78.)

•How can we keep ourselves from being "blinded by the craftiness of men"? (For some answers to this question, see Ephesians 4:11-15; 1 Nephi 15:24; Helaman 5:12; D&C 3:7-8; 21:4-6; 52:14-20.)

5. The celestial kingdom D&C 76:50-70, 92-96; 131:1-4; 132:19-24; 137. The celestial kingdom is the highest kingdom of glory. The Lord compared its glory to the glory of the sun (D&C 76:70, 78, 96; see also 1 Corinthians 15:40-41).

•Who will inherit the celestial kingdom? (See D&C 76:50-53, 68-69. The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Ghost, who confirms that the priesthood ordinances we have received and the covenants we have made are acceptable to God. This approval depends on our faithfulness.)

•About four years after the vision in D&C 76 was revealed, Joseph Smith received

a vision in which he saw his older brother Alvin in the celestial kingdom (D&C 137:1-5). Alvin had died in 1823, before the Church was restored. What did Joseph learn from seeing Alvin in the celestial kingdom? (See D&C 137:7-9.) What else did the Prophet learn about who inherits celestial glory? (See D&C 137:10.) How can these truths bring us comfort?

•What blessings will we receive if we inherit the celestial kingdom? (See D&C 76:54-67, 94-95.)

•How does our testimony of Jesus determine the kingdom we will inherit after we die? (See D&C 76:31, 35 [perdition]; D&C 76:82, 101 [telestial]; D&C 76:79 [terrestrial]; D&C 76:51-53, 69; 121:29 [celestial].) What does it mean to you to be "valiant in the testimony of Jesus"? (D&C 76:79).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: *"What does it mean to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus?"*

"It is to be courageous and bold; to use all our strength, energy, and ability in the warfare with the world; to fight the good fight of faith.... The great cornerstone of valiance in the cause of righteousness is obedience to the whole law of the whole gospel."

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'come unto Christ, and be perfected in him'; it is to deny ourselves 'of all ungodliness,' and 'love God' with all our 'might, mind and strength.'" (Moro. 10:32.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ and his gospel with unshakable conviction. It is to know of the verity and divinity of the Lord's work on earth."

"But this is not all. It is more than believing and knowing. We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. It is more than lip service; it is not simply confessing with the mouth the divine Sonship of the Savior. It is obedience and conformity and personal righteousness...."

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.' It is to 'endure to the end.'" (2 Ne. 31:20.) It is to live our religion, to practice what we preach, to keep the commandments. It is the manifestation of 'pure religion' in the lives of men; it is visiting 'the fatherless and widows in their affliction' and keeping ourselves 'unspeckled from the world.'" (James 1:27.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to bridle our passions, control our appetites, and rise above carnal and evil things. It is to overcome the world as did he who is our prototype and who himself was the most valiant of all our Father's children. It is to be morally clean, to pay our tithes and offerings, to honor the Sabbath day, to pray with full purpose of heart, to lay our all upon the altar if called upon to do so.

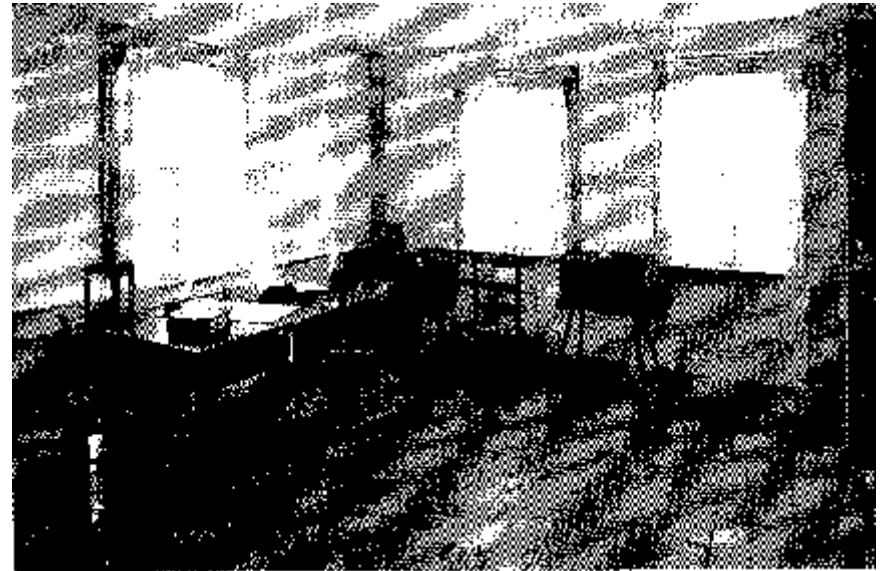
"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to take the Lord's side on every issue. It is to vote as he would vote. It is to think what he thinks, to believe what he believes, to say what he would say and do what he would do in the same situation. It is to have the mind of Christ and be one with him as he is one with his Father" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 45-46; or Ensign, Nov. 1974, 35).

- Eleven years after the vision in D&C 76 was revealed, the Prophet Joseph taught that there are three degrees within the celestial kingdom (D&C 131:1). Who will be exalted in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom? (See D&C 131:1-3; 132:19.)

- What blessing is available only to those who are exalted in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom? (See D&C 131:4; 132:19-20. The phrases "an increase" and "a continuation of the seeds forever and ever" mean that those who abide in the covenant and are exalted in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom will have spirit children in the eternities.)

- President Joseph Fielding Smith** of the Quorum of the Twelve said: *"Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants ... should be treasured by all members of the Church as a priceless heritage. It should strengthen their faith and be to them an incentive to seek the exaltation promised to all who are just and true"* (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2 vols. [1953], 1:279). How can this revelation strengthen our faith and inspire us to seek exaltation? How can we overcome any discouragement we may feel as we strive for celestial glory?

Conclusion: The great blessings of exaltation in the celestial kingdom are available to all people. Each of us can be made perfect through Jesus Christ and be exalted with our families in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. The revelation in D&C 76 should encourage us to keep the commandments and receive the ordinances of salvation so we can receive these great blessings.



John Johnson Home. While in this home working on a translation of the Bible, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the revelation now recorded in D&C 76, along with other revelations.

Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, Religion 324-325, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Sections 76, 131, 132, 137, pp 158-166, 324-334, & 353-356.

The Vision of the Degrees of Glory

Section 76

Historical Background

It had been over a year since the Prophet Joseph Smith began a revision of the Bible, and the months of January and February 1832 found him again involved in this assignment.

Through his study of the scriptures, many questions and problems relative to the Biblical account were resolved through revelation. One such question had to do with the term heaven. The Prophet wrote: "Upon my return from Amherst [Ohio] conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.

It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term 'Heaven,' as intended for the Saints' eternal home must include more kingdoms than one. Accordingly, on the 16th of February, 1832, while translating St. John's Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision: [D&C 76]." (History of the Church, 1:245.)

Philo Dibble was an eyewitness to the reception of this revelation. He wrote that "the vision which is recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of 'Father Johnson,' in Hiram, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the spirit and saw the heavens open, there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time—probably two-thirds of the time,—I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

"The events and conversation, while they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written,) I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

"Joseph would, at intervals, say: 'What do I see?' as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, 'I see the same.' Presently Sidney would say 'what do I see?' and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, 'I see the same.'

"This manner of conversation was reported at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

"Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, 'Sidney is not used to it as I am.'" (Juvenile Instructor, May 1892, pp. 303-4.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: "Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is transcript from the records

of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: 'It came from God.'" (History of the Church, 1:252-53.)

President Wilford Woodruff said of the vision that it "gives more light, more truth, and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going to. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be. For all men know what laws they keep, and the laws which men keep here will determine their position hereafter; they will be preserved by those laws and receive the blessings which belong to them." (In Journal of Discourses, 22:146-47.)

While it is often called "the vision," Doctrine and Covenants 76 is a series of visions combined into one grand revelation: a vision of the glory of the Son (vv. 20-24); a vision of the fall of Satan and the sufferings of those who follow him, who are sons of perdition (vv. 25-49); a vision of those who inherit the celestial glory and come forth in the resurrection of the just (vv. 50-70); a vision of those who inherit the terrestrial glory (vv. 71-80); and a vision of those who inherit the telestial glory (vv. 81-89). A comparison of the three degrees of glory is also given.

Notes and Commentary

D&C 76:1-4. "Beside Him There Is No Savior"

As do many sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, this vision begins with an affirmation of the power, glory, and majesty of Jesus Christ. It is fitting that the Lord would begin this revelation of the various eternal rewards with the reminder that only in Him is there power to save, that none can "stay his hand" (D&C 76:3), that none can stop Him from accomplishing His work, which is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

D&C 76:5-10. "I ... Delight to Honor Those Who Serve Me in Righteousness"

In these verses the Lord indicates that if a person fears Him (that is, respects, reverences, and obeys Him) and serves Him to the end, He will be delighted to honor that person. The honors include:

1. A great reward (see D&C 76:6).

2. Eternal glory (see v. 6).
3. Revelation of all mysteries of God's kingdom, both past and present (see v. 7; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 6:7, 11 for the definition of mystery).
4. Knowledge of His will concerning all things in the kingdom (see v. 7).
5. Knowledge of the wonders of eternity (see v. 8).
6. Knowledge of many generations (see v. 8).
7. Great wisdom (see v. 9).
8. Understanding that reaches to heaven and which the world cannot equal (see v. 9).
9. Enlightenment by the Spirit and power of God (see v. 10).

The mention of these promises at the beginning of this revelation is significant, for Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon indicated that they were not allowed to write all that they were shown (see vv. 113-15). Not only is it unlawful for man to reveal these things, but it is impossible for him to do so because they are so glorious that man is incapable of making them known (see vv. 115-16). The Savior states, however, that those who will "purify themselves before him" through the power of the Holy Spirit shall have the "privilege of seeing and knowing [these things] for themselves" (vv. 116-17).

D&C 76:15-19. "While We Meditated"

The Prophet and Sidney Rigdon were meditating when this revelation came. President Marion G. Romney said:

"As I have read the scriptures, I have been challenged by the word ponder, so frequently used in the Book of Mormon. The dictionary says that ponder means 'to weigh mentally, think deeply about, deliberate, meditate.' ...

"Pondering is, in my feeling, a form of prayer. It has, at least, been an approach to the Spirit of the Lord on many occasions." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 117; or Ensign, July 1973, p. 90.)

At least two other great visions came as a direct result of pondering. Nephi says that he was "pondering in mine heart" the things of his father's dream when he was "caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea into an exceeding high mountain" (1 Nephi 11:1). And President Joseph F. Smith said that he received his vision of the spirit world as he sat in his room "pondering over the scriptures; and reflecting" (D&C 138:1-2).

President David O. McKay taught the value of meditation: "I think we pay too little attention to the value of meditation, a principle of devotion....

"Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord. Jesus set the example for us. As soon as he was baptized and received the Father's approval 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. 3:17)-Jesus repaired to what is now known as the Mount of Temptation where, during forty days of fasting, he communed with himself and his Father and contemplated the responsibility of his own great mission. One result of this spiritual communion was such strength as enabled him to say to the tempter: 'Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' (Matt. 4:10.)" (In Conference Report, Apr. 1967, p. 85.)

D&C 76:20-24. The Testimony of Eyewitnesses This testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon is a modern witness of the reality of the existence of the Father and the Son. Joseph and Sidney not only saw but heard, and their testimonies stand as a witness to all people. The phrase "last of all" is explained by Smith and Sjodahl as follows: "This is the last testimony to the fact that He lives, a resurrected and glorified Being; not the final testimony but the last up to the time of this vision" (Commentary, p. 448).

D&C 76:24. Worlds without Number Were Created by the Lord

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, commenting on Jesus as the Creator, said that "our Lord's jurisdiction and power extend far beyond the limits of this one small earth on which we dwell. He is, under the Father, the Creator of worlds without number. (Moses 1:33.) ...

"Those who have ears to hear, find this doctrine taught in the following scripture: [D&C 76:20-24].

"In addition to the plain meaning of this passage, we have an explanation of it given by the Prophet Joseph Smith. He paraphrased, in poetical rhyme, the entire record of the Vision, and his words covering this portion were:

. And I heard a great voice bearing record from heav'n,
He's the Saviour and Only Begotten of God;
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,
Even all that careen in the heavens so broad."
(McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pp. 65-66.)

D&C 76:26. Lucifer Was an Angel of God, a Son of the Morning

President George Q. Cannon, commenting on Satan's title as a son of the morning, said: "Some have called him the son of the morning, but here it is a son of the morning-one among many, doubtless. This angel was a mighty personage, without doubt. The record that is given to us concerning him clearly shows that he occupied a very high position; that he was thought a great deal of, and that he was mighty in his sphere, so much so that when the matter was debated concerning the earth and the plan of salvation, he was of sufficient importance to have a plan, which he proposed as the plan by which this earth should be peopled and the inhabitants thereof redeemed. His plan, however, was not accepted; but it was so plausible and so attractive that out of the whole hosts of heaven one-third accepted his plan and were willing to cast their lot with him. [Moses 4:1-4; D&C 29:36-37.] Now, the difference between Jesus and Lucifer was this: Jesus was willing to submit to the Father." (In Millennial Star, 5 Sept. 1895, pp. 563-64.)

D&C 76:26. What Do the Names Lucifer and Perdition Mean?

Lucifer's name means "light bearer" or "shining one." The word perdition means "loss or destruction" (see Young, Concordance, s.v. "Lucifer," "Perdition"). Lucifer fell from his position as a glorious being to a position of utter loss and destruction (see Revelation 12:1-11; Moses 4:1-4). Knowing that one of Satan's names is Perdition helps us understand the title "son of perdition."

D&C 76:29. Who Has Satan Singled Out As His Enemies?

This verse warns that Satan will seek to make war with the Saints (cf. Revelation 12:17). Although Satan has great power, it is limited. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "There are three independent principles; the Spirit of God, the spirit of man, and the spirit of the devil. All men have power to resist the devil. They who have tabernacles, have power over those who have not." (Teachings, pp. 189-90.)

President George Q. Cannon testified that every man has power enough to resist Satan. "The Lord our God has sent us here to get experience in these things so that we may know the good from the evil and be able to close our hearts against the evil.... It is true that some have greater power o? resistance than others, but everyone has the power to close his heart against doubt, against darkness, against unbelief, against depression, against anger, against hatred, against jealousy, against malice, against envy. God has given this power unto all of us, and we can gain still greater power by calling upon Him for that which we lack. If it were not so, how could we be condemned for giving way to wrong influences?

"There could be no condemnation for our doing what we could not help; but we can help yielding to wrong influences and being quarrelsome and selfish. We can help giving way to the spirit of theft, and we can resist the spirit of lust. God has

given us power to resist these things, that our hearts may be kept free from them and also from doubt; and when Satan comes and assails us, it is our privilege to say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for I have no lot nor portion in you, and you have no part in me. I am in the service of God, and I am going to serve Him, and you can do what you please. It is no use you presenting yourself with your blandishments to me. You come and try to insinuate into my heart evil thoughts about the servants of God or about the work of God, and I will not listen to you; I will close my heart against you....'

"Whenever darkness fills our minds, we may know that we are not possessed of the Spirit of God, and we must get rid of it. When we are filled with the Spirit of God, we are filled with joy, with peace and with happiness no matter what our circumstances may be; for it is a spirit of cheerfulness and of happiness." (Gospel Truth, 1:19-20.)

D&C 76:31. To What Extent Must a Person Know God's Power and Be a Partaker Before He Becomes a Son of Perdition?

To become a son of perdition one must sin against the Holy Ghost, but before that is possible, one must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Elder Melvin J. Ballard explained that "unto the Holy Ghost has been given the right and the privilege of manifesting the truth unto men as no other power will. So that when he makes a man see and know a thing he knows it better than he shall ever know anything else; and to sin against that knowledge is to sin against the greatest light there is, and consequently commit the greatest sin there is." (Millennial Star, 11 Aug. 1932, pp. 499-500.)

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith further explained why sin against the Holy Ghost is so serious: "The Spirit of God speaking to the spirit of man has power to impart truth with greater effect and understanding than the truth can be imparted by personal contact even with heavenly beings. Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fibre and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten." ("The Sin against the Holy Ghost," Instructor, Oct. 1935, p. 431.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith asked, concerning those who become sons of perdition, "What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins

to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." (Teachings, p. 358.)

Elder Spencer W. Kimball wrote: "The sin against the Holy Ghost requires such knowledge that it is manifestly impossible for the rank and file to commit such a sin" (Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 123).

Of apostates who had committed the unpardonable sin, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life-the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost." (Teachings, p. 358.)

People do not come to such a state in a moment. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith described the path that some follow, which would cause them to hate God and his servants: "The change of heart does not come all at once, but is due to transgression in some form, which continues to lurk in the soul without repentance, until the Holy Ghost withdraws, and then that man is left to spiritual darkness. Sin begets sin, the darkness grows until the love of truth turns to hatred and the love of God is overcome by the wicked desire to destroy all that is just and true. In this way Christ is put to open shame, and blasphemy exalted." (Instructor, Oct. 1935, p. 432.)

Such people have placed themselves outside the redemptive powers of Christ (see Hebrews 6:4-9; 10:26-29; Matthew 12:31-32). They cannot partake of His mercy because they cannot incline themselves to repent, having totally lost the Spirit of God. Their sin "is an offense so heinous that the sinner is unable to repent; and this is what makes his case hopeless. If he could repent, he could be forgiven; but being incapable of repentance, he cannot be reached by the pardoning power." (Orson F. Whitney, Improvement Era, Mar. 1920, p. 413.)

"In the realms of perdition or the kingdom of darkness, where there is no light, Satan and the unembodied spirits of the pre-existence shall dwell together with those of mortality who retrogress to the level of perdition. These have lost the power of regeneration. They have sunk so low as to have lost the inclinations and ability to repent." (Kimball, Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 125.)

D&C 76:35. How Might Anyone "Crucify" the Only Begotten Son of the Father and "Put Him to an Open Shame"?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated that "commission of the unpardonable sin consists in crucifying unto oneself the Son of God afresh and putting him to open

shame. (Heb. 6:4-8; D. & C. 76:34-35.) To commit this unpardonable crime a man must receive the gospel, gain from the Holy Ghost by revelation the absolute knowledge of the divinity of Christ, and then deny 'the new and everlasting covenant by which he was sanctified, calling it an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace.' (Teachings, p. 128.) He thereby commits murder by assenting unto the Lord's death, that is, having a perfect knowledge of the truth he comes out in open rebellion and places himself in a position wherein he would have crucified Christ knowing perfectly the while that he was the Son of God. Christ is thus crucified afresh and put to open shame. (D. & C. 132:27.)" (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 816-17.)

Concerning the degree to which such people become filled with the spirit of Satan, Elder Charles W. Penrose said: "Those who have followed [Satan] so that they become imbued with his spirit, which is the spirit of destruction, in opposition to the spirit which brings life, are his. The spirit of murder enters their hearts; they are ready to put to death even the Son of God, if His existence in life comes in their way." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1911, p. 51.)

The scriptures sometimes use the phrase "shedding innocent blood" in reference to the actions of those in this condition. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that the shedding of innocent blood is not confined to taking lives of the innocent, but is also included in seeking to destroy the word of God and putting Christ to open shame. Those who have known the truth and then fight against the authorized servants of Jesus Christ also fight against Him, and thus are guilty of His blood. "Shedding innocent blood is spoken of in the scriptures as consenting to the death of Jesus Christ and putting him to open shame." (Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, 1:68.)

D&C 76:37. What Is the Second Death?

The term second death as used here refers to the spiritual death that will come upon those sons of perdition who have been resurrected. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "Spiritual death is to be cast out of the presence of the Lord, to die as to the things of righteousness, to die as to the things of the Spirit. Spirit beings as such never die in the sense of annihilation or in the sense that their spirit bodies are disorganized; rather, they continue to live to all eternity either as spirits or as resurrected personages....

"Eventually, all are redeemed from spiritual death except those who have 'sinned unto death' (D. & C. 64:7), that is, those who are destined to be sons of perdition. John teaches this by saying that after death and hell have delivered up the dead which are in them, then death and hell shall be 'cast into the lake of fire. This is the

second death.' (Rev. 20:12-15.) And thus the Lord said in our day that the sons of perdition are 'the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power' (D. & C. 76:37), meaning any power after the resurrection." (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 757-58; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 63:17; 64:7.)

D&C 76:38-39. Will Those Born into Mortality Who Become Sons of Perdition Receive a Resurrection?

President George Q. Cannon explained: "A careful reading of these verses, . . . and especially of the preceding paragraphs, will show that the Lord does not, in this language, exclude even the sons of perdition from the resurrection. It is plain that the intention is to refer to them explicitly as the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power: 'for all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb.' This excluded class are the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power, and 'the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the suffering of his wrath.'

"This is by no means to say that they are to have no resurrection. Jesus our Lord and Savior died for all, and all will be resurrected-good and bad, white and black, people of every race, whether sinners or not; and no matter how great their sins may be, the resurrection of their bodies is sure. Jesus has died for them, and they all will be redeemed from the grave through the atonement which he has made." (Juvenile Instructor, Feb. 1900, p. 123.)

D&C 76:40-43. "This Is the Gospel"

The word gospel (Anglo-Saxon for "good story") is translated from the Greek evangelion, which means "good tidings" or "glad tidings" (Thayer, GreekEnglish Lexicon, p. 257). In the New Testament the verb meaning "to preach or bear witness of the gospel" is evangelidzo, literally, "to bring good news, to announce glad tidings" (Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 256). Doctrine and Covenants 76 gives a summary of what the gospel, or glad tidings, consists of, namely, that all who will may be saved by the atoning power of Jesus Christ.

D&C 76:44-49. It Is Futile to Discuss the Fate of Sons of Perdition

It appears that in the early days of the Restoration some attempted to teach the destiny of the sons of perdition. The Prophet Joseph Smith responded by writing: "Say to the brothers Hulet and to all others, that the Lord never authorized them to say that the devil, his angels, or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor ever shall be

revealed, save to those who are made partakers thereof: consequently those who teach this doctrine have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. Truly Brother Oliver declared it to be the doctrine of devils. We, therefore, command that this doctrine be taught no more in Zion. We sanction the decision of the Bishop and his council, in relation to this doctrine being a bar to communion." (Teachings, p. 24.)

D&C 76:44. How Can the Sons of Perdition "Reign" in Eternity?

Smith and Sjodahl explained: "The Lord is the sovereign ruler. He reigns. Sin is said to reign, when men submit to its behests. Grace is also said to reign (Rom. 5:21). The Saints will reign with Christ. But here the sons of Perdition are said to 'reign' with the Devil and his angels in eternity, in the place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. The conflict between Lucifer and the Son has been, from the beginning, for sovereignty. Men have ranged themselves on one side or the other. The Saints are, and will be, citizens and officials in the Kingdom of God and there they will 'reign', as citizens in a free country. The sons of Perdition are, and will remain, citizens and officials in the kingdom of Lucifer. But that kingdom will, finally, be confined to Gehenna. There they will 'reign', under such laws and rules as obtain in the kingdom of the Devil, and of which we have had numerous illustrations in human history, during the dark ages of ignorance, superstition, tyranny, and iniquity. Think of a place where the evil passions of human beings and evil spirits rage, unrestrained by the influence of the gospel! Such is the kingdom of the Devil, where the sons of Perdition will reign." (Commentary, pp. 454-55.)

D&C 76:48. Are the Sons of Perdition "Ordained" to Be Such?

"Not foreordained, in the sense of pre-elected by God, to condemnation. God has ordained that rebellion against Him shall result, if persisted in to the end, in misery, but He has not foreordained anyone to that fate. A legislature may ordain that thieves must be imprisoned and murderers killed, but that does not mean that it has foreordained any individual, or any number of individuals, to do that which ends in imprisonment, or death. The sons of Perdition pursue their course according to their own choice, and not as victims of inexorable destiny." (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 455.)

D&C 76:50. What Is the Resurrection of the Just? There are two major resurrections: the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote about the resurrection of the just: "In modern revelation given to the Church, the Lord has made known more in relation to this glorious event. There shall be at least two classes which shall have the

privilege of the resurrection at this time: 'First, those who shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever'; and second, honorable men, those who belong to the terrestrial kingdom as well as those of the celestial kingdom.

"At the time of the coming of Christ, 'They who have slept in their graves shall come forth, for their graves shall be opened; and they also shall be caught up to meet him in the midst of the pillar of heaven. They are Christ's, the first fruits, they who shall descend with him first, and they who are first caught up to meet him; and all this by the voice of the sounding of the trump of the angel of God.' These are the just, 'whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all. These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.'

"Following this great event, and after the Lord and the righteous who are caught up to meet him have descended upon the earth, there will come to pass another resurrection. This may be considered as a part of the first, although it comes later. In this resurrection will come forth those of terrestrial order, who were not worthy to be caught up to meet him, but who are worthy to come forth to enjoy the millennial reign." (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:296.)

This first resurrection will extend into the Millennium and include all those worthy of the celestial kingdom who live and die during the thousand years.

D&C 76:53. What Does It Mean to Be Sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie defined the Holy Spirit of Promise as "the Holy Spirit promised the saints, or in other words the Holy Ghost. This name-title is used in connection with the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power given him to ratify and approve the righteous acts of men so that those acts will be binding on earth and in heaven. 'All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations,' must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have 'efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.' (D&C 132:7.)

"To seal is to ratify, to justify, or to approve. Thus an act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost; it is one which is approved by the Lord; and the person who has taken the obligation upon himself is justified by the Spirit in the thing he has done. The Aatifying seal of

approval is put upon an act only if those entering the contract are worthy as a result of personal righteousness to receive the divine approbation. They 'are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.' (D. & C. 76:53.) If they are not just and true and worthy the ratifying seal is withheld." (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 361-62; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 132:7.)

D&C 76:54. What Is the Church of the Firstborn?

"Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are those who are members of the Church of the Firstborn; in other words, those who keep all the commandments of the Lord....

"The Lord has made it possible for us to become members of the Church of the Firstborn, by receiving the blessings of the house of the Lord and overcoming all things. Thus we become heirs, 'priests, and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory,' who shall 'dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever,' with full exaltation." (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:41-42.)

Certain apostates have taken this sacred name upon themselves, blasphemously claiming to have met all of these requirements, when they are in fact in a state of wickedness and rebellion.

D&C 76:72-74. Do Those Who Receive the Gospel in the Spirit World Inherit the Terrestrial Kingdom?

Those who hear the gospel in mortality and do not accept it but lead otherwise honorable lives will inherit the terrestrial kingdom. Those who do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel in mortality but accept it in the spirit world can inherit the celestial kingdom.

Joseph Smith learned through another revelation that "all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God" (D&C 137:7). Those "who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh" (D&C 76:74) are those who heard the gospel in mortality and rejected it. If they "afterwards received it" (v. 74), that is, in the spirit world, they will go to the terrestrial kingdom.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught the foolishness of believing that a person can reject the gospel in this life, accept it in the next, and still inherit celestial glory. "This life is the time and day of our probation. After this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

"For those who do not have an opportunity to believe and obey the holy word in this life, the first chance to gain salvation will come in the spirit world. If those who hear the word for the first time in the realms ahead are the kind of people who would have accepted the gospel here, had the opportunity been afforded them, they will accept it there....

. . . Those who reject the gospel in this life and then receive it in the spirit world go not to the celestial, but to the terrestrial kingdom." ("The Seven Deadly Heresies," in Speeches of the Year, 1980 [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1981], pp. 77-78.)

Elder Theodore M. Burton said: "There are many in this world who lived and died without ever having an opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. We know that there are many men and women who die unbaptized, because some teacher, missionary, or leader who should have taught them was so poorly trained, so lacking in faith, and so unprepared to bear personal witness of Jesus Christ that the hearer never understood the message as he should have done. Should such people be damned forever for lack of proper instruction, because of an accident of birth, or because of the inadequacies of others? I say: 'No!' God is a God of justice and love and mercy. Every man is entitled to a just chance to know and accept Jesus Christ or to reject him if he feels the price of acceptance is too high" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 72).

D&C 76:79. What Does It Mean to Be Valiant in the Testimony of the Savior?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie asked: "What does it mean to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus?"

"It is to be courageous and bold; to use all our strength, energy, and ability in the warfare with the world; to fight the good fight of faith.... The great cornerstone of valiance in the cause of righteousness is obedience to the whole law of the whole gospel.

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'come unto Christ, and be perfected in him'; it is to deny ourselves 'of all ungodliness,' and 'love God' with all our 'might, mind and strength.' (Moro. 10:32.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ and his gospel with unshakable conviction. It is to know of the verity and divinity of the Lord's work on earth.

"But this is not all. It is more than believing and knowing. We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. It is more than lip service; it is not simply confessing

with the mouth the divine Sonship of the Savior. It is obedience and conformity and personal righteousness. 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' (Matt. 7:21.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.' It is to 'endure to the end.' (2 Ne. 31:20.) It is to live our religion, to practice what we preach, to keep the commandments. It is the manifestation of 'pure religion' in the lives of men; it is visiting 'the fatherless and widows in their affliction' and keeping ourselves 'unspotted from the world.' (James 1:27.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to bridle our passions, control our appetites, and rise above carnal and evil things. It is to overcome the world as did he who is our prototype and who himself was the most valiant of all our Father's children. It is to be morally clean, to pay our tithes and offerings, to honor the Sabbath day, to pray with full purpose of heart, to lay our all upon the altar if called upon to do so.

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to take the Lord's side on every issue. It is to vote as he would vote. It is to think what he thinks, to believe what he believes, to say what he would say and do what he would do in the same situation. It is to have the mind of Christ and be one with him as he is one with his Father." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1974, pp. 45-46; or Ensign, Nov. 1974, pp. 33-35.)

D&C 76:81-85. Those Who Inherit the Telestial Glory Will Pass through Hell

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "That part of the spirit world inhabited by wicked spirits who are awaiting the eventual day of their resurrection is called hell. Between their death and resurrection, these souls of the wicked are cast out into outer darkness, into the gloomy depression of sheol, into the hades of waiting wicked spirits, into hell. There they suffer the torments of the damned; there they welter in the vengeance of eternal fire; there is found weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; there the fiery indignation of the wrath of God is poured out upon the wicked. (Alma 40:11-14; D. & C. 76:103-106.)

"Hell will have an end. Viewing future events, John saw that 'death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.' (Rev. 20:13.) Jacob taught that this escape from death and hell meant the bringing of the body out of the grave and the spirit out of hell. 'And this death of which I have spoken, which is the spiritual death,' he said, 'shall deliver up its dead; which spiritual death is hell; wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave

must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored one to the other.' (2 Ne. 9:10-12.) It was in keeping with this principle for David to receive the promise: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.' (Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27.)

"After their resurrection, the great majority of those who have suffered in hell will pass into the telestial kingdom; the balance, cursed as sons of perdition, will be consigned to partake of endless wo with the devil and his angels....

"Who will go to hell? This query is abundantly answered in the scriptures. Since those going to a telestial kingdom travel to their destination through the depths of hell and as a result of obedience to telestial law, it follows that all those who live a telestial law will go to hell." (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 349-50.)

D&C 76:89-106. Why Will Those Who Inherit the Telestial Kingdom Receive a Glory That "Surpasses All Understanding"?

All who receive the telestial kingdom will have paid a price for this glory. The fact that after they pay this price they inherit a telestial glory is evidence of the Father's love and mercy. Elder John A. Widtsoe wrote:

"The [Doctrine and Covenants] explains clearly that the lowest glory to which man is assigned is so glorious as to be beyond the understanding of man. It is a doctrine fundamental in Mormonism that the meanest sinner, in the final judgment, will receive a glory which is beyond human understanding, which is so great that we are unable to describe it adequately. Those who do well will receive an even more glorious place. Those who dwell in the lower may look wistfully to the higher as we do here. The hell on the other side will be felt in some such way.

"The Gospel is a gospel of tremendous love. Love is at the bottom of it. The meanest child is loved so dearly that his reward will be beyond the understanding of mortal man." (Message of the Doctrine and Covenants, p. 167.)

Only the sons of perdition, who deny the truth and openly defy God (see D&C 76:31), will be denied a kingdom of glory (see Notes and Commentary on D&C 76:31-49).

D&C 76:111. "Every Man Shall Receive According to His Own Works"

"We are not preaching the gospel with the idea of trying to save people in the terrestrial world. Ours is the salvation of exaltation. What we are trying to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ is to bring people back again, through the power of the priesthood and the ordinances of the Church, as sons and daughters of God,

receiving a fulness of the Father's kingdom. That is our endeavor." (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:190-91.)

D&C 76:116. They Are Only to Be Seen and Understood by the Power of the Holy Spirit

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: "Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject." (History of the Church, 6:50.)

Keys to Exaltation

Section 131

Historical Background

On 16 May 1843 the Prophet Joseph Smith, in company with William Clayton and four others, left Nauvoo for Ramus, Illinois, twenty-two miles to the southeast. The same evening found Joseph Smith and William Clayton in the home of Benjamin F. Johnson, where before retiring the Prophet gave some instructions on the priesthood to Brother and Sister Johnson. During that evening he turned to William Clayton, placed his hand on his knee, and said, "Your life is hid with Christ in God, and so are many others. Nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent you from inheriting eternal life for you are sealed up by the power of the Priesthood unto eternal life, having taken the step necessary for that purpose." (History of the Church, 5:391.)

After making other personal observations, the Prophet gave Brother Clayton the message found in Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-4.

The next morning, 17 May 1843, the Prophet spoke on 2 Peter 1, showing that the more knowledge a person has, the more power he has. Verses 5-6 were given in that morning meeting (see History of the Church, 5:392). Four days later, in the Nauvoo Temple, the Prophet again spoke on the power of knowledge and the doctrine of making one's calling and election sure.

On the evening of 17 May the Prophet went to hear a Methodist preacher lecture. The Prophet afterwards offered some corrections to what had been said. Some of

the corrections have been included in section 131, verses 7-8. (See History of the Church, 5:392-93.)

The three items of instruction given by the Prophet on 16-17 May 1843 were combined into one section and added to the Doctrine and Covenants in 1876.

Notes and Commentary

D&C 131:1. What Are the Three Degrees in the Celestial Kingdom?

The Lord has not revealed to the Church who will live in two of the three degrees in the celestial kingdom. Any discussion on this topic is speculation. More has been revealed about the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, or exaltation. That is where the Father would have all of His children live if they keep His commandments. In Doctrine and Covenants 76:50-70 the Lord outlines the requirements to obtain the highest degree in the celestial kingdom.

D&C 131:2. What Is "the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage"?

Elder George Q. Cannon taught: "We believe that when a man and woman are united as husband and wife, and they love each other, their hearts and feelings are one, that that love is as enduring as eternity itself, and that when death overtakes them it will neither extinguish nor cool that love, but that it will brighten and kindle it to a purer flame, and that it will endure through eternity; and that if we have offspring they will be with us and our mutual associations will be one of the chief joys of the heaven to which we are hastening.... God has restored the everlasting priesthood, by which ties can be formed, consecrated and consummated, which shall be as enduring as we ourselves are enduring, that is, as our spiritual nature; and husbands and wives will be united together, and they and their children will dwell and associate together eternally, and this, as I have said, will constitute one of the chief joys of heaven; and we look forward to it with delightful anticipations." (In Journal of Discourses, 14:320-21; see also Notes and Commentary for D&C 22:1; 132:13-18.)

The explanatory phrase in brackets in verse 2 was inserted by Elder Orson Pratt, under the direction of President Brigham Young, when the section was added to the Doctrine and Covenants.

D&C 131:4. What Is Eternal Increase?

Those who comply with the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and endure to the end gain the right to become eternal parents. The Prophet Joseph Smith, as

he spoke verses 1-4 to William Clayton, stated: "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory." (History of the Church, 5:391; see also Smith, Teachings, pp. 300-301.)

On 30 June 1916, the First Presidency of the Church (Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose) declared: "So far as the stages of eternal progression and attainment have been made known through divine revelation, we are to understand that only resurrected and glorified beings can become parents of spirit offspring. Only such exalted souls have reached maturity in the appointed course of eternal life; and the spirits born to them in the eternal worlds will pass in due sequence through the several stages or estates by which the glorified parents have attained exaltation." (In Clark, Messages of the First Presidency, 5:34.)

President Spencer W. Kimball taught that the right to eternal increase will depend directly on how individuals keep the marriage covenant in this life:

"One young man said that he expected to reach exaltation in the celestial kingdom as one of the Lord's messengers, without having to marry. He does not understand. No one who rejects the covenant of celestial marriage can reach exaltation in the eternal kingdom of God.

"In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

"And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

"And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

"He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.' (D&C 131:1-4.)

"He cannot have an increase! He cannot have exaltation!

"The Lord says further in the 132nd section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"No one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory' (D&C 132:4).

"No one! It matters not how righteous they may have been, how intelligent or how well trained they are. No one will enter this highest glory unless he enters into the covenant, and this means the new and everlasting covenant of marriage." ("The Importance of Celestial Marriage," Ensign, Oct. 1979, pp. 5-6.)

D&C 131:5. What Is "the More Sure Word of Prophecy"?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "Those members of the Church who devote themselves wholly to righteousness, living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, make their calling and election sure. That is, they receive the more sure word of prophecy, which means that the Lord seals their exaltation upon them while they are yet in this life. Peter summarized the course of righteousness which the saints must pursue to make their calling and election sure and then (referring to his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with James and John) said that those three had received this more sure word of prophecy. (2 Pet. 1.) ...

"Those so favored of the Lord are sealed up against all manner of sin and blasphemy except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and the shedding of innocent blood. That is, their exaltation is assured; their calling and election is made sure, because they have obeyed the fulness of God's laws and have overcome the world." (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 109-10; see also D&C 132:17, 26; Notes and Commentary for D&C 76:53.)

D&C 131:6. How Important Is Knowledge?

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God." (History of the Church, 4:588.)

Marriage: An Eternal Covenant

Section 132

Historical Background

It is clear that the Prophet Joseph Smith received section 132 before it was recorded but delayed making it known. The Prophet knew the Lord's will on plural marriage within the new and everlasting covenant probably as early as 1831 (see

History of the Church, 5:xxix). In March 1843 he spoke to William Clayton of eternal marriage. In July of that year, he was discussing the doctrine with his brother Hyrum in William Clayton's presence when Hyrum said, "If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take it and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace" (History of the Church, 5:xxxii).

The Prophet consented and told William Clayton to get some paper to write; but to his brother's "urgent request" that the Prophet use the Urim and Thummim to recall the exact revelation, Joseph replied that he did not need it, "for he knew the revelation from beginning to end" (History of the Church, 5:xxxii). When he had finished dictating, William Clayton read it back slowly, and Joseph said that it was exact.

Bishop Newel K. Whitney heard the revelation read and asked permission of the Prophet Joseph Smith to have it copied. With the Prophet's approval, Bishop Whitney sent Joseph C. Kingsbury the next day to copy it. Brothers Kingsbury and Clayton compared the copy line by line to the original and found it correct. The revelation was not made public until Elder Orson Pratt, under the direction of President Brigham Young, announced it at a Church conference on 29 August 1852. The revelation was placed in the Doctrine and Covenants in 1876.

Smith and Sjodahl pointed out that the revelation has two major sections: "The first, comprising vv. 3-33, deals mainly with the principle of celestial marriage, or marriage for time and all eternity; the second, comprising the remaining verses, deals with plural marriage. The doctrine of celestial marriage remains in force; the practice of plural marriage was abandoned by the acceptance by the Church, in Conference assembled October 6th, 1890, of the Manifesto of President Woodruff." (Commentary, p. 821; also see Historical Background on Official Declaration 1.)

Notes and Commentary

D&C 132:13-18. "If a Man Marry ... in the World"

After quoting Doctrine and Covenants 132:13, President Spencer W. Kimball said: "How final! How frightening! Since we know well that mortal death does not terminate our existence, since we know that we live on and on, how devastating to realize that marriage and family life, so sweet and happy in so many homes, will end with death because we fail to follow God's instructions or because we reject his word when we understand it.

"It is clear in the Lord's announcement that righteous men and women will receive the due rewards of their deeds. They will not be damned in the commonly accepted terminology but will suffer many limitations and deprivations and fail to reach the highest kingdom, if they do not comply. They become ministering servants to those who complied with all laws and lived all commandments.

"[The Lord] then continues concerning these excellent people who lived worthily but failed to make their contracts binding:

"For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.' (D&C 132:17.)

"How conclusive! How bounded! How limiting! And we come to realize again as it bears heavily upon us that this time, this life, this mortality is the time to prepare to meet God. How lonely and barren will be the so-called single blessedness throughout eternity! How sad to be separate and single and apart through countless ages when one could, by meeting requirements, have happy marriage for eternity in the temple by proper authority and continue on in everincreasing joy and happiness, growth and development toward godhood....

"Are you willing to jeopardize your eternities, your great continuing happiness, your privilege to see God and dwell in his presence? For the want of investigation and study and contemplation; because of prejudice, misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge, are you willing to forego these great blessings and privileges? Are you willing to make yourself a widow for eternity or a widower for endless ages-a single, separate individual to live alone and serve others? Are you willing to give up your children when they die or when you expire, and make them orphans? Are you willing to go through eternity alone and solitary when all of the greatest joys you have ever experienced in life could be 'added upon' and accentuated, multiplied, and eternalized? Are you willing, with the Sadducees, to ignore and reject these great truths? I sincerely pray you stop today and weigh and measure and then prayerfully proceed to make your happy marriage an eternal one. Our friends, please do not ignore this call. I beg of you, open your eyes and see; unstop your ears and hear." ("Temples and Eternal Marriage," Ensign, Aug. 1974, p. 6.)

D&C 132:19-22. How Does an Individual Obtain a Fulness of God's Glory?

The revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants include all of the laws necessary for exaltation. If we keep the law revealed in section 132 and all the other laws, such as faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost, we can be exalted.

Some members of the Church mistakenly believe that marriage in the temple fulfills the requirements of the covenant. But marriage in the temple fulfills only the first two parts of the covenant. Having one's marriage sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise requires a lifelong commitment to righteousness (see Notes and Commentary on D&C 132:7). Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that "baptism is the gate to the celestial kingdom; celestial marriage is the gate to an exaltation in the highest heaven within the celestial world. (D. & C. 131:1-4.) To gain salvation after baptism it is necessary to keep the commandments of God and endure to the end (2 Ne. 31:17-21); to gain exaltation after celestial marriage it is necessary to continue the same devotion and righteousness. Those who have been married in the temples for eternity know that the ceremony itself expressly conditions the receipt of all promised blessings upon the subsequent faithfulness of the husband and wife.

"Making one's calling and election sure is an addition to celestial marriage and results from undeviating and perfect devotion to the cause of righteousness. Those married in the temple can never under any circumstances gain exaltation unless they keep the commandments of God and abide in the covenant of marriage which they have taken upon themselves." (Mormon Doctrine, p. 118.)

D&C 132:19. What Is the Lamb's Book of Life?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that "in a literal sense, the book of life, or Lamb's book of Life, is the record kept in heaven which contains the names of the faithful and an account of their righteous covenants and deeds. (D. & C. 128:6-7; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5; 21:27.) The book of life is the book containing the names of those who shall inherit eternal life; it is the book of eternal life. (Dan. 12:1-4; Heb. 12:23; D. & C. 76:68; 132:19.) It is 'the book of the names of the sanctified, even them of the celestial world.' (D. & C. 88:2.) Names of faithful saints are recorded in the book of life while they are yet in mortality. (Luke 10:20; Philip. 4:3; Teachings, p. 9.) But those names are blotted out in the event of wickedness. (Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 22:19.)" (Mormon Doctrine, p. 97; the phrase "innocent blood" is explained in Notes and Commentary on D&C 132:27.)

D&C 132:22-25. What is "the Continuation of the Lives" and the "Deaths"?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: "Those who gain eternal life (exaltation) also gain eternal lives, meaning that in the resurrection they have eternal 'increase,' 'a continuation of the seeds,' a 'continuation of the lives.' Their spirit progeny will 'continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.' (D. & C. 131:1-4; 132:19-25, 30, 55.)" (Mormon Doctrine, p. 238; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 131:4.)

President Joseph Fielding Smith further explained that "the term 'deaths' mentioned here has reference to the cutting off of all those who reject this eternal covenant of marriage and therefore they are denied the power of exaltation and the continuation of posterity. To be denied posterity and the family organization, leads to the 'deaths,' or end of increase in the life to come." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2:360; see also McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 283.)

D&C 132:26-27. Does Marriage in the Temple Assure One of Exaltation, No Matter How One Lives?

President Harold B. Lee taught: "Some folks have the mistaken notion that if somehow, by hook or crook, they can get into the House of the Lord and be married they are assured of exaltation regardless of what they do, and they'll quote the 132 Section, the 26th verse. But that isn't what the Lord means. The Lord does assure an exaltation to those who make mistakes, if they repent." (Cram for Life's Final Examination, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, 5 Jan. 1954] , p. 7.)

President Joseph Fielding Smith commented: "Verse 26, in Section 132, is the most abused passage in any scripture. The Lord has never promised any soul that he may be taken into exaltation without the spirit of repentance. While repentance is not stated in this passage, yet it is, and must be, implied. It is strange to me that everyone knows about verse 26, but it seems that they have never read or heard of Matthew 12:31-32, where the Lord tells us the same thing in substance as we find in verse 26, section 132....

"So we must conclude that those spoken of in verse 26 are those who, having sinned, have fully repented and are willing to pay the price of their sinning, else the blessings of exaltation will not follow. Repentance is absolutely necessary for the forgiveness, and the person having sinned must be cleansed." (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:95-96.)

The key phrase is "and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise" (D&C 132:26.) This sealing is related to having one's calling and election made sure. (See Notes and Commentary for D&C 76:53; 131:5; 132:7.)

Speaking of the promise in Doctrine and Covenants 132:26, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "Making one's calling and election sure comes after and grows out of celestial marriage. Eternal life does not and cannot exist for a man or a woman alone, because in its very nature it consists of the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Thus the revelation on marriage speaks both of celestial marriage (in which the conditional promises of eternal life are given) and of

making one's calling and election sure (in which the unconditional promises of eternal life are given) in one and the same sentence which sentence also says that those who commit sins (except 'murder whereby to shed innocent blood') after being sealed up unto eternal life shall still gain exaltation. This is the language: 'Then'-that is, after their calling and election has been made sure [D&C 132:19-20 cited].

"Then the revelation [D&C 132:26] speaks of that obedience out of which eternal life grows, and still speaking both of celestial marriage and of making one's calling and election sure says: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment'-that is, if they are both married and have their calling and election made sure. .. 'they shall come forth in the first resurrection and enter into their exaltation.'" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3:343-44.)

"What if those whose calling and election has been made sure thereafter commit grievous sins? Suppose they backslide and walk in the ways of wickedness? Or fight the truth and rebel against God-what then?

"That all men commit sin, before and after baptism, and for that matter, before and after their calling and election is made sure, is self-evident. There has been only one Sinless One-the Lord Jesus who was God's own Son.

"Thus in the revelation announcing the setting up of the restored church in this day, the Lord says: 'There is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God; Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also.' (D. & C. 20:32-34.)

"The prophets and apostles from Adam and Enoch down, and all men, whether cleansed and sanctified from sin or not, are yet subject to and do in fact commit sin. This is the case even after men have seen the visions of eternity and been sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise which makes their calling and election sure. Since these chosen ones have the sure promise of eternal life, and since 'no unclean thing can enter into' the Father's 'kingdom' (3 Ne. 27:19), 'or dwell in his presence' (Moses 6:57), what of sins committed after being sealed up into eternal life?

"Obviously the laws of repentance still apply, and the more enlightened a person is, the more he seeks the gift of repentance, and the harder he strives to free himself from sin as often as he falls short of the divine will and becomes subject in any degree to the Master of Sin who is Lucifer. It follows that the sins of the godfearing

and the righteous are continually remitted because they repent and seek the Lord anew every day and every hour.

"And as a matter of fact, the added blessing of having one's calling and election made sure is itself an encouragement to avoid sin and a hedge against its further commission. By that long course of obedience and trial which enabled them to gain so great a blessing the sanctified saints have charted a course and developed a pattern of living which avoids sin and encourages righteousness. Thus the Lord said: 'I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch unto you, to hold the sealing blessings of my church, even the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby ye are sealed up unto the day of redemption, that ye may not fall notwithstanding the hour of temptation that may come upon you. (D. & C. 124:124.)

"But suppose such persons become disaffected and the spirit of repentance leaves them-which is a seldom and an almost unheard of eventuality-still, what then? The answer is-and the revelations and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith so recite!they must then pay the penalty of their own sins, for the blood of Christ will not cleanse them. Or if they commit murder or adultery, they lose their promised inheritance because these sins are exempt from the sealing promises. Or if they commit the unpardonable sin, they become sons of perdition." (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3:342-43.)

D&C 132:46. Can the Sealing of a Temple Marriage Be Broken?

The power to seal is also the power to unseal. This power is held by the President of the Church. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "Properly speaking there is no such thing as a temple divorce; divorces in this day are civil matters handled by the courts of the land. But following a civil divorce of persons who have been married for eternity in the temples, if the circumstances are sufficiently serious to warrant it, the President of the Church has power to cancel the sealings involved. He holds the keys and power both to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. (Matt. 16:19; D. & C. 132:46; Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, p. 84.)" (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 110-11.)

Vision of the Celestial Kingdom

Section 137

Historical Background

The Kirtland Temple was nearly complete in January 1836. For many weeks before its dedication on 27 March, the brethren held classes and meetings in it. The

Prophet recorded that on Thursday, 21 January 1836, "at early candle-light I met with the Presidency at the west school room, in the Temple, to attend to the ordinance of anointing our heads with holy oil; also the Councils of Kirtland and Zion met in the two adjoining rooms, and waited in prayer while we attended to the ordinance. I took the oil in my left hand, Father Smith being seated before me, and the remainder of the Presidency encircled him round about. We then stretched our right hands towards heaven, and blessed the oil, and consecrated it in the name of Jesus Christ.

"We then laid our hands upon our aged Father Smith, and invoked the blessings of heaven. I then anointed his head with the consecrated oil, and sealed many blessings upon him. The Presidency then in turn laid their hands upon his head, beginning at the oldest, until they had all laid their hands upon him, and pronounced such blessings upon his head, as the Lord put into their hearts, all blessing him to be our Patriarch, to anoint our heads, and attend to all duties that pertain to that office. The Presidency then took the seat in their turn, according to their age, beginning at the oldest, and received their anointing and blessing under the hands of Father Smith. And in my turn, my father anointed my head, and sealed upon me the blessings of Moses, to lead Israel in the latter days, even as Moses led him in days of old; also the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All of the Presidency laid their hands upon me, and pronounced upon my head many prophecies and blessings, many of which I shall not notice at this time. But as Paul said, so say I, let us come to visions and revelations." (History of the Church, 2:379-80.)

This night the spirit of prophecy and revelation was poured out on the brethren. In addition to the vision of the celestial kingdom, the Prophet Joseph Smith saw in vision the Savior standing in the midst of the present Twelve Apostles who were laboring in foreign lands, and he saw the Twelve Apostles and the Presidency in the celestial kingdom. Many of the other brethren saw glorious visions and received the ministration of angels. Some even saw the face of the Savior. (See History of the Church, 2:381-82).

The vision of the celestial kingdom, which is now Doctrine and Covenants 137, was not part of the standard works until 1976. During the April general conference of that year, the Church voted to accept this vision and the vision of the redemption of the dead (D&C 138) as scripture. These revelations were originally placed in the Pearl of Great Price. However, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve later decided to move them to the new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants as sections 137 and 138. (See Church News, 2 June 1979, p. 3.)

Notes and Commentary

D&C 137:1. What Did the Prophet Mean by "Whether in the Body or Out I Cannot Tell"?

The Apostle Paul made a similar statement in describing a revelation he had (see 2 Corinthians 12:3). When the Lord gives revelations to His children He communicates through the power of the Holy Ghost to their spirit (see 1 Corinthians 2:9-14).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught an important principle concerning revelation: "All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen and proper to reveal to us, while we are dwelling in mortality, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract, and independent of affinity of this mortal tabernacle, but are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all; and those revelations which will save our spirits will save our bodies. God reveals them to us in view of no eternal dissolution of the body, or tabernacle." (Teachings, p. 355.)

When the Prophet Joseph recorded his vision of the three degrees of glory, he said that "by the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God" (D&C 76:12). Moses, in his vision in Moses 1, said, "Mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes" (v. 11). He said of the things he saw that he "discerned them by the spirit of God" (v. 28). Enoch said that he saw "things which were not visible to the natural eye" (Moses 6:36).

In an account of the Prophet Joseph Smith's first vision, Elder Orson Pratt recorded: "When [the light] first came upon him, it produced a peculiar sensation throughout his whole system; and, immediately, his mind was caught away from the natural objects with which he was surrounded; and he was enwrapped in a heavenly vision" (in James B. Allen, "Eight Contemporary Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision: What Do We Learn from Them?" Improvement Era, Apr. 1970, p. 10). When the Lord gives such revelations to His children, they become enveloped in the Spirit and filled with His glory to such an extent that they become oblivious to the things of the natural world.

D&C 137:2-3. Why Is God's Presence Described As "Blazing" and "Like unto Circling Flames of Fire"?

The Prophet Joseph Smith in his account of the First Vision wrote that God's "brightness and glory defy all description" (JS-H 1:17). He also taught that "God Almighty Himself dwells in eternal fire; flesh and blood cannot go there, for all corruption is devoured by the fire. 'Our God is a consuming fire.' [Heb. 12:29]....

. . . Immortality dwells in everlasting burnings." (Teachings, p. 367.) President Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "God is full of energy, and should we mortals stand in his presence, unless his spirit was upon us to protect us we would be consumed. That is how much energy there is in a celestial body." (Seek Ye Earnestly, p. 275.)

D&C 137:5-8. The Salvation of Joseph Smith's Brother Alvin

Alvin Smith was the first son of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith. He was born on 11 February 1798, nearly seven years before Joseph Smith Jr. He died on 17 November 1823, three months before his twenty-fifth birthday. His mother recorded that "Alvin manifested, if such could be the case, greater zeal and anxiety in regard to the Record that had been shown to Joseph [the Book of Mormon plates], than any of the rest of the family" (Smith, History of Joseph Smith, p. 89).

The Prophet Joseph Smith had great love and respect for Alvin but was concerned for his eternal welfare because he had not had the opportunity to receive baptism and other priesthood ordinances necessary for exaltation. This revelation was a great source of joy and consolation to Joseph. The Lord has provided the means for Alvin Smith and others who would have received the gospel with all their hearts if they had been permitted to tarry to enjoy a fulness of His blessings in the eternal worlds (see D&C 137:7).

D&C 137:5. Salvation of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith

The Prophet Joseph Smith saw in vision both his father and mother in the celestial kingdom. This was a vision of a future event, since they had not died.

In fact, the Prophet's father was in the room with him at the time of the vision (see Historical Background for D&C 137).

D&C 137:7-9. On What Basis Will All Mankind Be Judged?

The true desire of our heart determines our future. If we have had the opportunity to hear the gospel, our obedience to it demonstrates our true desire. If not, our desire will determine whether we accept it when we are given the opportunity, either in this life or the spirit world. All whose hearts are right will receive and live the gospel whenever they have the opportunity and will be "heirs of the celestial kingdom of God" (D&C 137:7). Vicarious ordinance work is performed in the temple for those like Alvin Smith who did not have the opportunity to receive the ordinances of the gospel in mortality. Heavenly Father provides the way for all His children to receive salvation (see Alma 41:3-15).

D&C 137:10. "All Children Who Die Before They Arrive at the Years of Accountability Are Saved in the Celestial Kingdom"

Following are some frequently asked questions concerning the status of children who die before the age of accountability.

Are they automatically saved? Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "To this question the answer is a thunderous yes, which echoes and re-echoes from one end of heaven to the other. Jesus taught it to his disciples. Mormon said it over and over again. Many of the prophets have spoken about it, and it is implicit in the whole plan of salvation. If it were not so the redemption would not be infinite in its application. And so, as we would expect, Joseph Smith's Vision of the Celestial Kingdom contains this statement: 'And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven.' [D&C 137:10.]

"It is sometimes asked if this applies to children of all races, and of course the answer is that when the revelation says all children it means all children. There is no restriction as to race, kindred, or tongue. Little children are little children and they are all alive in Christ, and all are saved by him, through and because of the atonement....

"They are saved through the atonement and because they are free from sin. They come from God in purity; no sin or taint attaches to them in this life; and they return in purity to their Maker. Accountable persons must become pure through repentance and baptism and obedience. Those who are not accountable for sins never fall spiritually and need not be redeemed from a spiritual fall which they never experienced. Hence the expression that little children are alive in Christ.... "Truly it is one of the sweetest and most soulsatisfying doctrines of the gospel! It is also one of the great evidences of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. In his day the fiery evangelists of Christendom were thundering from their pulpits that the road to hell is paved with the skulls of infants not a span long because careless parents had neglected to have their offspring baptized. Joseph Smith's statements, as recorded in the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation, came as a refreshing breeze of pure truth: little children shall be saved. Thanks be to God for the revelations of his mind where these innocent and pure souls are concerned!" ("The Salvation of Little Children," Ensign, Apr. 1977, pp. 4, 7.)

Even though little children will be saved, does that mean they will have eternal life? Elder McConkie explained: "Eternal life is life in the highest heaven of the celestial world; it is exaltation; it is the name of the kind of life God lives. It consists of a continuation of the family unity in eternity.... children will be saved in the celestial kingdom. Salvation means eternal life; the two terms are

synonymous; they mean exactly the same thing. Joseph Smith said, 'Salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses and in nothing else.' (Lectures on Faith, pp. 63-67.) We have come to speak of this salvation as exaltation-which it is-but all of the scriptures in all of the standard works call it salvation. I know of only three passages in all our scriptures which use salvation to mean something other and less than exaltation." ("Salvation of Little Children," p. 5.)

President Joseph Fielding Smith added: "The Lord will grant unto these children the privilege of all the sealing blessings which pertain to the exaltation.

"We were all mature spirits before we were born, and the bodies of little children will grow after the resurrection to the full stature of the spirit, and all the blessings will be theirs through their obedience, the same as if they had lived to maturity and received them on the earth.

"The Lord is just and will not deprive any person of a blessing, simply because he dies before that blessing can be received. It would be manifestly unfair to deprive a little child of the privilege of receiving all the blessings of exaltation in the world to come simply because it died in infancy....

"Children who die in childhood will not be deprived of any blessing. When they grow, after the resurrection, to the full maturity of the spirit, they will be entitled to all the blessings which they would have been entitled to had they been privileged to tarry here and receive them." (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:54; see also Mosiah 15:25.)

Why do some children die and others live? Are those who die better off than those who remain in mortality? Elder McConkie wrote:

"We may rest assured that all things are controlled and governed by Him whose spirit children we are. He knows the end from the beginning, and he provides for each of us the testings and trials which he knows we need. President Joseph Fielding Smith once told me that we must assume that the Lord knows and arranges beforehand who shall be taken in infancy and who shall remain on earth to undergo whatever tests are needed in their cases. This accords with Joseph Smith's statement: 'The Lord takes many away, even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth.' (Teachings, pp. 196-97.) It is implicit in the whole scheme of things that those of us who have arrived at the years of accountability need the tests and trials to which we are subject and that our problem is to overcome the world and attain that spotless and pure state which little children already possess." ("Salvation of Little Children," p. 6.)

Will children who die before the years of accountability ever be tested in the way that other mortals are tested? President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "Satan cannot tempt little children in this life, nor in the spirit world, nor after their resurrection. Little children who die before reaching the years of accountability will not be tempted." (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:57; see also D&C 29:47; 45:58.)

What will happen to children in the Resurrection? President Joseph F. Smith wrote: "Joseph Smith taught the doctrine that the infant child that was laid away in death would come up in the resurrection as a child; and, pointing to the mother of a lifeless child, he said to her: 'You will have the joy, the pleasure, and satisfaction of nurturing this child, after its resurrection, until it reaches the full stature of its spirit.' There is restitution, there is growth, there is development, after the resurrection from death. I love this truth. It speaks volumes of happiness, of joy and gratitude to my soul. Thank the Lord he has revealed these principles to us." (Gospel Doctrine, pp. 455-56.)